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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5434
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCPDO/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUYNAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA PRIORITY
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SIPDIS

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USTR FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - DPRK NUCLEAR
DECLARATION

¶1. LEAD STORIES: All Tokyo papers gave top play on Friday morning to President Bush's notification to Congress on Thursday of his intent to delist North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism following Pyongyang's submission to China of a declaration of its nuclear programs.

¶2. "Declaration Should Lead to Complete Denuclearization" The liberal Asahi editorialized (6/27): "North Korea finally produced a declaration of its nuclear programs. Although details of the document remain unclear, this is an important step toward the denuclearization of North Korea.... Although the submission of the declaration will not reduce the North Korean nuclear threat, it represents progress on the road to preventing Pyongyang from producing more material for nuclear weapons.... What we should do next is clear. We should resume the six-party talks as early as possible to decide how to verify the declaration. Pyongyang should accept inspectors and technicians in good faith."

¶3. "Suspicion Cannot Be Allowed to Remain" The liberal Mainichi's editorial argued (6/27): "...The six-party talks have reached a turning point, and a step forward has been taken. However, North Korea's declaration does not include information about nuclear weapons, the biggest concern. Information about highly enriched uranium and technical assistance to Syria will be reported in a separate document. This cannot be called a 'complete and correct' declaration.... Thorough verification of the declaration is necessary.... Japan should maintain its coordination with the U.S. so as

not to allow North Korea to neglect its commitment to reinvestigating the abductions of Japanese nationals."

¶4. "Challenges Remain for Denuclearization" The moderate Yomiuri's editorial said (6/27): "...Although the contents of the declaration have yet to be made public, the declaration appears to be insufficient based on the U.S. explanation.... The six-party talks, which are expected to reconvene as early as next week, should intensively discuss how to verify the declaration. If North Korea fails to fulfill the six-party agreement, the U.S. should immediately withdraw its decision to delist the nation."

¶5. "U.S. Should Rethink Decision to Delist North Korea" The business-oriented Nikkei insisted in an editorial (6/27): "...This is a crisis that could undermine the foundation of the U.S.-Japan alliance. The situation could change if North Korea takes effective measures for verification in the next 45 days and concrete progress is made on the abduction issue. However, if Pyongyang fails to do so, the Bush administration needs to cancel delisting.... We would like to ask President Bush whether he wants to be remembered in history as a president who made the decision that led the U.S. to lose its most important ally in the Pacific."

¶6. "Insufficient Declaration Unacceptable" The conservative Sankei editorialized (6/27): "...Although this was expected, the U.S. decision on delisting is extremely regrettable, as the declaration by North

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Korea does not include information about its nuclear weapons, something that is critically important for Japan. While the declaration will be carefully scrutinized, we have to wonder how effectively and completely this can be done in the 45 days before delisting goes into effect."

¶7. "Verification Should Be Carried Out Quickly and Thoroughly" The liberal Tokyo Shimbun's editorial said (6/27): "...A declaration has finally been submitted. The six-party talks will move forward.... It is urgent that the chief delegates to the talks discuss specific measures to verify the declaration and conduct onsite inspections."

SCHIEFFER